

# C I R C U L A R .

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## Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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To PHYSICIANS:

SECRETARY'S OFFICE, BOSTON, }  
May 23, 1849. }

Gentlemen,—A new act, in relation to the registration of Births, Marriages, and Deaths, was passed May 2d, 1849. It is designed to secure the desired facts more accurately than the laws hitherto in force have done. To carry the law fully into effect, and to accomplish all the State designs by its passage, the coöperation and aid of intelligent men is necessary; and no class can be more useful, in this respect, than the medical profession, and none, it is believed, will feel a greater interest in its execution. The facts which registration might furnish will do much to induce people to preserve their own health, but they will do more to aid physicians in curing disease. Physicians can assist town clerks and registrars in two ways;—

*First*, by keeping a record of all births at which they attend professionally, and by allowing those who obtain the facts concerning these events for public use, to examine these records, in order to assist them in ascertaining all the births which take place, and in identifying the parties. If physicians would provide themselves with books containing blank forms for these records, which may be had for a trifling expense, and immediately enter the facts at the birth of each child, it would be of great public service.

*Secondly*, by certifying on the blank which may be presented by town clerks, undertakers superintending the burial of a person deceased, or others interested, the cause of death of such persons as they may have attended during their last sickness. One of the great designs of the law is, to ascertain the causes of death with as much accuracy as possible. The certificate of the physician, who is acquainted with each case, is essential to this accuracy. In England all persons seem not only willing, but desirous, to aid the government to carry the registration laws which exist there into full effect. A recent medical writer, of the highest authority, says:—"For years our medical thousands have daily and hourly written out the causes of death, bringing the whole knowledge of the profession to bear upon this single point, as unpaid services. In the aggregate this labor has been enormous, but it has been given, freely rendered, by the profession to the government, without fee or reward."

The zeal which has governed the profession in England will, it is certain, not be wanting in Massachusetts. In that case, a noble work will be performed for the promotion of science and the public good, as well as for the individual benefit of each member of the profession.

With great respect,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM B. CALHOUN,

*Secretary of State.*

W. D. Calhoun

Secretary of State

Circular to Physicians

C I R C U L A R

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

TO THE PHYSICIANS

SECRETARY'S OFFICE, BOSTON.  
May 23, 1849.

Sir,--A new act, in relation to the registration of births, marriages, and deaths, was passed May 18, 1849. It is designed to secure the desired facts more accurately than the law hitherto in force has done. To carry the law fully into effect, and to accomplish all the State designs by its provisions, a co-operation and aid of intelligent men is necessary; and no class can be more useful, in this respect, than the medical profession, and none, it is believed, will feel a greater interest in its execution. The law which registration might furnish will do much to induce people to preserve their own health, but they will do more to aid physicians in curing diseases. Physicians can assist town clerks and registrars in two ways:--

First, by keeping a record of all births at which they attend professionally, and by informing those who obtain the birth certificate of the facts which they are to register. These facts are to be registered in a book in the town clerk's office, which book will take place, and be binding on the parties. It is probable that these books will be found for a trifling expense, and immediately enter the facts at the birth of each child, it would be of great public service.

Secondly, by certifying on the blank which may be presented by town clerks, undertakers superintending the burial of a person deceased, or others interested, the cause of death of such persons as they may have attended during their last sickness. One of the great objects of the law is to ascertain the causes of death with as much accuracy as possible. The certificate of the physician, who is so acquainted with each case, is essential to this accuracy. In England all persons seem not only willing, but desirous to aid the government to carry the registration laws which exist there into full effect. A second medical class of the highest authorities, says:--"For years our medical elements have daily and hourly written out the causes of death, bringing the whole knowledge of the profession to bear upon this single point of rapid service. In the aggregate this labor has been enormous, but it has been given, freely rendered, by the profession to the government, without fee or reward."

The good which has governed the profession in England will, it is certain, not be wanting in Massachusetts. In that case, a noble work will be performed for the promotion of science and the public good, as well as for the individual benefit of each member of the profession.

With great respect,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM D. CALHOUN

Secretary of State